

## **King Street Retail Study**

### **Guiding Principles**

During the process of the King Street Retail Study, a set of guiding principles was drafted in response to the issues raised in the first Advisory Group workshops. The purpose of the guiding principles was to begin the process of documenting a vision for King Street, identifying what “ought” to happen on King Street, and providing focused direction of the Plan for initial review.

Over the course of two additional workshops, each of the draft guiding principles was reviewed. Based upon the consensus or feedback, the Design Team refined the principles.

These Guiding Principles are presented below, in six major areas:

- **King Street Organization**
  - **Streetscape**
  - **Land Use/Zoning**
  - **Old Town Graphics Program**
  - **Parking/Circulation Improvement Strategies**
  - **Economic Issues**
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#### **I. KING STREET ORGANIZATION**

- Create a public/private organization to manage the King Street operations and advise the City Council
- Create a Management/Advisory organization for King Street – King Street Partnership (KSP) to:
  - Support/Enhance the King Street Mission and Goals/Objectives
  - Advise the City Council on issues that relate to King Street
  - Coordinate the parking resources
  - Establish/monitor retail/entertainment standards or guidelines for operations
  - Provide merchandising expertise
  - Work with the City to establish streetscape standards

- Identify public and private maintenance responsibilities
- Create an organization that will become self-funding

## **II. STREETSCAPE**

- Vistas
  - Maintain and enhance the visual focal points that terminate the views at the east and west ends of King Street
  - Minimize the elements that block the vistas
  - Add a visual element at the foot of King Street at the waterfront
  - Identify the location of all overhead lines within the King Street Area
  - Work with the City to continue the undergrounding of the power lines and poles on the Capital Improvement Program
- Sidewalk/Street
  - Develop standards and guidelines for the design of the King Street sidewalk
    - Typical sidewalk 14' building to curb
    - Establish a typical 7'-8' wide Pedestrian Zone – BUT permit reduction to 5' for maximum length of 30' to accommodate sidewalk dining
    - Establish a Street Tree Zone of 4'
    - Balance of sidewalk for landscape/storefront/stoops
  - Require all sidewalks to be red brick – allow pattern to vary
  - Require planting (preferably seasonal color) or tree grates – No open dirt
  - Evaluate the King Street street-tree planting and maintenance standards
  - Establish standards for trees – size and type
  - Consider places for children to play
  - Identify and implement locations for sitting and respite along King Street
  - Encourage a greater level of landscaping in the “storefront, landscape, stoop zone”
  - Enhance the Streetscape with additional landscaping in strategic areas
  - Use permanent and temporary public art as a marketing tool to attract and/or keep visitors
- Lighting
  - Explore options for increasing the lighting level in the pedestrian areas
    - Encourage stores to maintain show window lighting until 11 PM to maintain interest on the street and to create more ambient light on the sidewalk
    - Add additional pedestrian lighting within the existing fixtures

- Replace the existing fixture with a double-headed fixture
- Maintain the tree lights year round to 11 PM
- Selectively trim trees to permit more light to reach the sidewalk
  
- Street Clutter
  - Remove the visual clutter that competes with the historic district and the overall character of the neighborhood
  - Establish standards and guidelines for the public and private elements in the streetscape
  - Establish process for, and require review of public elements in the streetscape (e.g., signals, infrastructure, signs)
  - Remove long signal arms – utilize pole-mounted signals
  - Establish and maintain a streetscape standard
  - Establish a streetscape standard for public infrastructure
  - Consider alternatives to the parking meters that would reduce the visual impact of parking control, while reducing cost of operations
  
- Directional Signs
  - Create a comprehensive set of well-designed signs for direction/control
  - Create a comprehensive/integrated wayfinding and historic interpretive sign program
    - Integrate the wayfinding with a Citywide wayfinding program
  - Create an orientation center (kiosk) at the Metro or King Street Gardens
  - Create an Alexandria Cultural Walk
  - Establish a directory of commercial and cultural enterprises
  - Create a strategy for locating and mounting the signs
  - Create a higher standard of sign design commensurate with the quality of Old Town
  
- Commercial Signs
  - Reconsider the requirements/enforcement of wall signs, signs on glass, show windows and awnings
  - Enforce the removal of nonconforming signs
  - Consider the appropriateness of sidewalk signs – currently not permitted
    - If deemed appropriate - establish guidelines for types, size, construction and placement
    - Special Event Days only?
    - Specific days of the week?

- Are they appropriate on the N/S side streets, to add visibility from King St.?
- Consider monitoring by the King Street Partnership organization
- Outdoor Dining/Vending
  - Encourage the opportunity for outdoor dining in the King Street/Old Town area
  - Establish standards and guidelines for outdoor dining
    - Location
    - Size
    - Containment
    - Sun protection
    - Ingress/Egress
    - Hours/Season
    - Maintenance
    - Insurance
    - Clean-up
  - Allow outdoor dining with an administrative permit if it conforms with the guidelines
  - Consider the opportunity for outdoor vending in the King Street/Old Town/King Street Gardens areas
    - Special event days
    - Limit the display/sales activity to the landscape, stoop, storefront zone
- Historic Culture
  - Develop the “Alexandria Walk” as a major attraction for King Street/Old Town including:
    - Common signage
    - Common opening hours
    - Common promotion
    - Self-guided and docent-guided tours
    - Museum Shop
  - Encourage the completion of the historic plaque program along King St.
  - Identify and rank the historic resources in Old Town/King Street that are not included within the existing historic districts
  - Complete the inventory of the secondary historic resources within Old Town

- Begin the planning process to resolve the issues that are impediments to creating a world-class waterfront consistent with the potential for Old Town
- Design national chains and all commercial buildings to conform to the historic culture of Alexandria
- Architectural Heritage
  - Create walking tours and “fun walks” that capitalize upon Old Town’s preserved architectural heritage and authentic “urban” experience
  - Establish educational programs between design professionals and adults and schoolchildren to understand the architectural and urban planning heritage

### **III. LAND USE/ZONING**

- Create a New King Street Zoning Overlay
  - Modify the current CD & OCH zone where it abuts King Street to conform to the existing and/or desired pattern of development
    - Eliminate the inconsistent permitted uses, e.g., single houses, hospitals, nursing homes, etc.
  - Provide incentives where possible to achieve the desired goals for King Street
  - Recognize that King Street is a mixed-use neighborhood – and craft zoning language to accommodate a mix of uses
  - Recognize that King Street is a series of related districts that have different characteristics and requirements
- Ensure the preservation of the historic character through performance standards – while providing greater flexibility for creative solutions
- Use a “form-based approach” that augments the zoning provision and describes/documents the desired form of the streetscape
- Create development controls in the OCH zone (south side of King Street from Hampton Inn eastward to the intersection of Peyton Street) where properties are not within either of the two historic areas
- Ground Floor and Upper Floor Uses
  - Ground Floor Uses
    - Assure retail activity along the street by limiting office, financial institutions & residential uses on the ground floor
    - Optimize the pedestrian experience by requiring 65-75% of the ground floor to be show windows/storefront in new development
    - Establish maximum width of 25' for personal service establishments and ground floor lobbies along King Street

- Upper Floor Uses
  - Encourage full utilization of upper floors
    - Office to provide daytime users
    - Residential to provide 16-hour activity and lights on the street
  - Reduce parking disincentive for residential
- Overlay Zone
  - Based upon the approval of detailed standards and guidelines, the overlay zone would accommodate proposals such as:
    - Administrative level planning approval for outdoor dining
    - Administrative SUP for approval of certain types of full-service restaurants in specific districts
    - SUP approval of fast food dining to limit the amount of fast food in a district
    - Administrative level planning approval for valet parking for individual businesses
  - Make FAR requirements consistent for various uses. Use form-based requirements for the street facade, lot coverage and height to determine amount of development
  - Create storefront design guidelines that are coordinated with the BAR guidelines
    - Storefronts to conform with the historic culture of Alexandria's Old Town character
    - Develop facade improvement programs

#### **IV. OLD TOWN GRAPHICS PROGRAM**

- Create a Graphics Program to be part of an overall, Citywide graphics identification and way finding program
  - Information
    - What is here to see and do
    - Directory
  - Interpretation
    - Explanation of the historic resources; understanding the history
    - Educational
  - Wayfinding
    - Parking & Street Identification
  - Promotion/Celebration/Events
  - Regulatory
    - Traffic
    - Parking

- Old Town/King Street Identification
  - Provide markers to identify Old Town & King Street
    - Create an identity for Old Town/King Street for visitors traveling north and south on Washington and Route 1
    - Establish monuments in the Washington Street median to recognize Old Town and King Street
      - Create options for entering Old Town/King Street other than via King Street
  - Create programs to promote seasons or events
    - Consider changeable banner program to announce the seasons, holidays or special events
    - Create a pilot program to explore the appropriateness of banners

## **V. PARKING/CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES**

- Develop brochure and website identifying available off-street parking, costs, hours, etc.
- Develop plan for enhanced/improved parking signage – locations, design concept, information. This is tied to general thematic improvement in street furniture, plantings, street and pedestrian signage
- Implementation of new “Park Alexandria” parking validation program
  - Develop agreements with parking garage owner-operators regarding acceptance of merchant distributed stamps/passes
  - Develop purchase mechanism for merchant purchase of parking discount media
  - Develop logo, professional marketing campaign to include events, posters, brochures, discount media to make merchant community fully aware, and provide them with tools needed to let their customers know
  - “Park Alexandria” to be included in overall parking information campaign with brochure and website – to show which merchants, which garages offer this benefit
- Valet Parking - Simplify approval process by permitting administratively rather than through SUP
  - Create standards for valet parking
  - Location of off-street parking supply and contract with provider
  - Consider consolidated valet parking operation when multiple separate operations reach defined limit per block, and restaurant interest sufficient to provide financial support
- Transit Shuttle
  - Develop operational plan and costs for lunchtime shuttle connecting PTO to waterfront area for during lunch hours (link to PTO Metro shuttle)
  - Identify potential funding sources

- Parking Management/Organization - Create an organization to plan and coordinate the public and private parking resources
  - Implementation Plan – Organizational responsibility, funding sources, timetable, capital plans
- Create sheltered bus stops at King & Washington Streets

## **VI. ECONOMIC ISSUES**

- Recruitment and Retention of Businesses
  - Specific opportunities in the existing and potential retail market mix have been identified for King Street. The following are recommended as types of uses that should be targeted for recruitment
    - Art & Related Stores (arts/crafts, music, etc.)
    - Grocery Store
    - Entertainment (including waterfront venue)
  - Recruitment programs should focus on attracting locally-owned, independent stores.
    - Continue the City/AEDP's sponsorship of entrepreneur and small business development programs to encourage the "incubation" of small, locally-owned businesses
  - Retention - City/AEDP should expand the outreach and monitoring of existing businesses to foresee problems and assist the business entities
  - Intervention - The City, AEDP, or some monitoring agency should identify actions in support of existing businesses that may be threatened for a variety of reasons
  - Outreach/Promotion - City/ACVA should develop programs for outreach & promotion in addition to event planning. Identify methods of increasing business without increasing the number of visitors
  - Networking - Proactive programs to strengthen ties among existing operators
  - Local Buyer Programs - Programs should target not only residents and employee shoppers, but also King Street businesses so that local businesses assist each other by buying locally
  - Hotels/Conferences - Continue effort begun by ACVA to build close relationships w/ the hotels so that guests patronize local businesses
  - Employees/Business Visitors - Target these groups. Tie-ins between business and conferences should be strengthened.
- Recreational Programming
  - Program open spaces to accommodate activities that will provide entertainment for visitors and residents, especially in summer
  - Link the waterfront and other areas with existing and potential new trails for biking, walking, and recreation to bring people (not cars) to King Street, as envisioned in the City's Open Space Plan



- Enhance the waterfront physically and programmatically to celebrate the waterfront tradition and the city's history as a port
- Provide new programs that will create active boating festivals and races that can bring focus to the King Street waterfront
- Create a comprehensive waterfront plan to include an active/passive new waterfront
- Organize crew regattas, volleyball & softball tournaments or leagues and other outdoor recreation opportunities
- Economic Incentives
  - Revolving Loan Fund
    - Through the implementation of a Business Improvement District (BID), create a Revolving Loan Fund that provides monies to retailers to assist in various aspects of initiating a new business. Potential uses could be storefront design and improvements, interior improvements, inventory, working capital, etc
  - Other Incentives
    - Encourage businesses to purchase buildings to control rents
    - Utilize CBDG monies to assist new businesses
    - Utilize upper floor spaces that are typically less rent than ground floor space